

TO: All Full-time and Part-time Faculty

FROM: The Office of Instruction

RE: **Spring 2015 First Day Handout – Course Syllabus**

This memo is to provide you with information and ideas on what all LMC course syllabi should include.

Please submit an electronic copy of your syllabus to sschmidt@losmedanos.edu in the Office of Instruction by the first day of your class. **Due to the large number of documents we receive we would appreciate it if you could send your documents saved as: your last name Class & section (i.e. SmithMath-004-0090).**

If you want to include the semester or anything after that for your purposes that is fine, but please have this at the beginning of each document title. Thank you for your help!

Tips:

- The syllabus should be professional in appearance yet it should be as student-friendly as possible.
- The tone should be respectful, encouraging, and welcoming to students
 - Tone communicates a helpful, positive attitude
 - Tone should be motivational and non-threatening
- Communicate High Expectations
 - All students are expected and encouraged to succeed in the course
 - All students are capable of obtaining their educational goal
 - Descriptions that empower all students to believe they can meet and excel at the course goals and objectives
 - All students are expected to actively participate in classroom discussions and rigorous learning activities
 - All students and faculty are to be highly respectful of each other
- Once you have written the syllabus, share it with others for feedback as to its clarity, completeness, and tone.
- *Put a copy of the syllabus on the course website.* Take advantage of the web and provide hyperlinks to resources to which the syllabus refers. Send an electronic copy to the Office of Instruction.
- *Print the syllabus in bright, colored paper.* Students will be able to find it easily during the semester.

Information that a syllabus should include:

Course Information

- Title and course number
- Number of units
- Semester (fall, spring, or summer)
- Materials fee (if applicable)
- Meeting time and location
- If the course has “Hours by Arrangement” the syllabus must include the specific block of times when the TBA/HBA hours must be filled and include the instructional activities to be conducted during TBA/HBA. Please emphasize participation is mandatory and must be factored into the final grade.

Instructor Information

- Name of instructor
- Office address and phone extension
- Email address
- Student hours (formerly office hours) – list all 5 weekly hours (some can be scheduled in the CORE)
- Preferred method of communication (phone versus email versus other)

Introduction to the Course

- Overview of course material
- Connection to overall program. Transfer and career information.

Prerequisites

- What classes they should already have had or what they should know to succeed
- What they should do if they don't meet the prerequisites

Student Learning Outcomes (Accreditation Requirement)

- What knowledge should students demonstrate at the end of the course
- What skills should students demonstrate at the end of the course
- The outcomes will be assessed (evaluated) by the instructor in order to improve the teaching/learning process
- Accreditation requires us to include SLOs in every syllabus and students are expected to “demonstrate awareness” of the SLOs of the course and the program.

Textbooks and other readings

- Required texts and articles
- Recommended texts and articles
- Readings (including optional) and other preparations for each class meeting
- Other course-related materials (if any)
- Where to locate or purchase texts and materials – availability in the library or the reserve section

Course Calendar or Schedule

- Sequence of course topics with tentative (or firm) dates
- Due dates for and nature of assignments, exams
- Calendar of class activities

Grading/Evaluation Methods

- Grading breakdown for the course – percentage for exams, tests, assignments, projects et cetera
- Percentages for determining the final grade of A, B, C, D, F, or P/NP
- Attendance cannot be a factor in grading; however, if participation is included in grading, clearly explain how it will be assessed.
- Indicate if the course is ‘student choice’ with a brief explanation that it cannot be reversed once the student has selected ‘student choice’
- Clear grading breakdowns and explanations are very helpful when a student challenges his/her grades.

College Policies

Sample Statement on Academic Honesty for Syllabi:

Los Medanos College is committed to student learning, and in order to protect the validity of students’ intellectual work and the authenticity of their achievements, the college expects that all students will be committed to the value of academic honesty. As such, the Student Code of Conduct holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit in all courses. Students should be familiar with the policy and know that it is their responsibility to follow instructor and general academic expectations with regard to academic honesty, including proper citation of sources in written work and the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments. Serious consequences can result from engaging in academic dishonesty of any sort, including plagiarism, cheating, or assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty. Consequences may include a warning, loss of points on specific assignments, removal from class for the day, and/or notification to the Dean of Students office for disciplinary review.

For more information and the complete Student Code of Conduct, visit:

<http://www.losmedanos.edu/studentcodeofconduct/>

Statement on ADA accommodations:

Students with documented learning and/or physical disabilities may receive reasonable classroom and/or testing accommodations. Please make these arrangements with the instructor at the beginning of the semester or as soon as possible after documentation has been determined. Last minute requests may not be determined to be “reasonable.”

Statement about Auditing Policy

All students must be enrolled – the college does not permit sitting in or auditing.
All students must enroll prior to the deadline for late enrollment

Course-specific and/or Department policies

- Attendance
- Dropping the class
- Missed exams/makeup work
- collaborative work
- Use of technology, electronic/social media, etc.

Classroom conduct and student expectations

- Regular and timely attendance
- No food or drinks in computer labs
- Children and non-enrolled persons are not allowed to 'sit in' in the class
- Create a respectful learning environment for all students in the class
- Your expectations about the use (or lack of use) of cell phones during class time
- Include in your syllabus a statement about how long students are expected to wait if you are unexpectedly late. (15 – 20 minutes is reasonable).

Additional ideas and information that a syllabus may include:

Course/Instructor Philosophy

- Philosophy on teaching and learning
- Conceptual structure used to organize the course and why it is organized so

Consideration of Student Needs, Aspirations and Resources

- Development of student study skills and critical thinking abilities
- Location of additional resources: labs, Center for Academic Support, tutoring, counseling, study skills courses, library, and other support services
- Description of how class and course objectives will prepare students for future courses and/or academic goals and careers
- Transfer information as applicable. LMC's Academic Senate has asked faculty to include detailed information on the transferability of courses (CSU/UC/IGETC, area/requirement fulfilled, etc.)
- Program Information. Please include information about where this course fits in the program to encourage more completions of certificates, degrees and transfers.
- Please encourage students to meet with a counselor to develop an individual educational plan.
- Description of type of support students could receive in preparation for tests and papers
- Provide students the link to the class cancellation notice on main LMC webpage. Here is the link: <http://www.losmedanos.edu/classcancel/>

Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Format of class
- Required activities: wide-variety of instructional techniques and resources
- Recommended activities; expectation of active participation by all students
- Suggested learning strategies

Connection to Student's Cultural and Historical Backgrounds

- Statement on the valuing of diversity
- Choose texts and materials that reflect a variety of cultural experiences
- Relevance of course to student's socio-cultural realities

For CTE Majors

- Include information about the annual CTE Employment Outcomes survey that students will receive from the college once they have completed their studies. Example:

“Los Medanos College is partnering with community colleges from around the state to assess the effectiveness of our Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. We are participating in a study that will gather student perspectives on issues such as whether students became employed within their field of study, if their community college coursework positively affected their earning potential and how CTE programs can be improved.

Sometime following the completion of your studies at LMC (at least one full year) you will receive a survey by email, US mail and/or telephone. Completing the survey will greatly benefit the mission of the college as it relates to workforce development. Your participation will support the college's goal to deliver high-quality and effective educational programs to our community.”

Once class begins, how to use your syllabus:

Here are a few suggestions that have been collected from faculty colleagues:

- *Hand out the syllabus at the first class meeting.* By doing this, you set the tone and expectations of the course early. The syllabus demonstrates to students that the course is well prepared and will be presented in an organized manner.
- *Spend time reviewing and discussing the syllabus with your students.* Be prepared to answer questions about your testing and grading policies, and other matters of concern to students.
- *Discuss class conduct and your professional expectations of your students* so that all students may succeed.
- *Duplicate more copies than you have students.* Be prepared to replace lost syllabi, and have copies made for students enrolling late.